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ABSTRACT

The procedures currently used in the 12 European Community (EC) member countries for certifying the employment qualifications of graduates of full-time vocational education and training programs and/or apprenticeship programs were compared. The comparison, which was based on information obtained from 12 national studies of EC members' education and vocational training systems, focused on the following: formulation and award of vocational training certificates; content and assessment; access to qualifications; certification; and trends and issues. Existing assessment and certification procedures were found to vary widely among the individual EC members. In France, for example, examinations are written according to a standard formula and taken by all candidates on one date, whereas in Germany local chambers of commerce and industry design and set their own examinations. Most countries that do not already have national assessment and certification procedures are in the process of instituting them, and there is a general trend toward upgrading vocational training certificates. Throughout the EC, efforts are being made to broaden access opportunities to all vocational training certificates. (Tables detailing the types of awards given by each EC member country by mode of acquisition, level of responsibility, and organization of assessment are appended.) (MN)

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN FORCE IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

SUMMARY AND TABLES

Introduction

As part of the work in preparing for the social partners the "Joint opinion on vocational qualifications and certification" adopted on 3 July 1992, the Centre was called upon to undertake an analysis of systems and procedures of certification in force in the Member States of the European Community.

There was no overview of the international situation. In work on vocational training qualifications, how does this relate to the validation? What procedures are used in the Member States for recognizing qualifications through awarding a certificate/diploma? Which laws protect the "market value" of qualifications? Who has the power to confer awards?

The authors of the descriptive monographs on vocational training systems, another CEDEFOP project, are ideally placed to gain access to the information needed to respond to these questions and for the most part were entrusted with the work. This study which was carried out over a few months, based on a standardized list of questions culminated in twelve studies which may be obtained free-of-charge in the "CEDEFOP Panorama" series. In these, the authors, after briefly summarizing the main characteristics of the vocational training system in their country, describe the ways in which qualifications are validated and certified in drawing up diplomas/certificates, certification procedures or the various means of access to diplomas/certificates.

The CEDEFOP glossary defines certification as "the issuing and/or awarding of a diploma, examination certificate or other vocational training qualification by authorized bodies, training institutions or individuals".

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The international comparison of the twelve national studies which was entrusted to an institute specialized in the international comparison of education and vocational training systems gave birth to an initial draft summary.

This has been published in the same series as the national studies to make it available to a large number of readers and to indicate to the readership our desire to gather as much comment as possible on this attempt to provide an overview. In addition, tables drawn up by the research institute are attached to this issue of the Flash.

It is an extremely challenging task to analyse in a comparative form the national situations which are themselves heterogenous, complex and in a constant state of flux. The readers' comments will permit us to improve this reference work as a useful tool.

As stated in the Council Resolution of 3.12.1992 on transparency of qualifications, the aim is "the improvement of mutual understanding of, and confidence in, the diverse qualifications systems of Member States and the qualifications themselves."

This issue of Flash Special attempts to give an initial concise summary of the findings of the comparative analysis.

1. Formulation and award of vocational training certificates

1.1. Legal Responsibility

In the majority of European Community Member States the Ministry of Education holds ultimate responsibility for conferring awards certifying qualifications. Even where the Ministry of Labour and Employment has responsibility, for example in the area of continuing vocational training, the Ministry of Education guarantees its official nature and, consequently, national recognition.

In addition, ultimate responsibility falls upon the corresponding ministry, be it defence, navy, health or agriculture.

In Belgium the linguistic community (German, Flemish or French) has the power of legislation following political restructuring. At a central level it has the right of homologation in as far as it is involved in funding a vocational training activity leading to the award.

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The United Kingdom and Ireland have systems with a variety of certification bodies. In the UK a number of independent professional organizations award certificates and in Ireland this occurs under the aegis of the ministries. To avoid certain disparities, both countries are creating an homogenous national structure.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the chambers of commerce and industry have the legal right to confer awards. They share this legislative power with the ministries of education at the federal state level. These are responsible only for awards conferred for initial training where this is given at a school. The awards which are called certificates conferred at federal state level are recognized at national level on account of agreement reached by the education ministries within the permanent national conference. In-company training in the dual system is the responsibility of the national ministry for economic affairs after consulting the education and labour ministries.

In France and in Italy where there is greater regionalization of vocational training, it is the state which awards certificates and assures their validity at a national level. In both these countries there are no certificates awarded by regional authorities.

Throughout the countries certificates are awarded which are not part of the official national procedure for certification of qualifications and this is particularly true of continuing training where often the value of the certificate depends upon the reputation of the body conferring it. As this could bring about a "recognition deficit", France and Belgium to compensate for this loss have instigated a system of homologation and Spain is currently following in their footsteps.

1.2 Role of the social partners

In France professional bodies may initiate training courses which result in recognized qualifications on account of collective bargaining agreements or which may be the subject of homologation. The social partners are represented in joint consultative commissions which formulate and update vocational training certificates. The decision to homologate is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour as delegated by the Prime Minister.

The joint professional committees in Denmark put forward proposals for new courses to the relevant ministry. In each of the Member States the part played by the social partners is of decisive importance in certifying awards upon completing apprenticeship. This is the case in the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark,

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Luxembourg and The Netherlands where the chambers, the associations or professional bodies have legislative prerogatives.

In all Member States the social partners endeavour to increase their involvement in certification of vocational training. The system recently implemented in Greece confers upon the social partners an indispensable rôle. Readers should refer at this point to the study commissioned by the EC Commission in the FORCE programme "The rôle of the social partners in validating continuing vocational training".

Sectoral bodies may confer awards recognized within the sector. This is the case in several sectors in France and in the banking sector in Luxembourg.

In the Federal Republic of Germany the sectoral and central representatives of the social partners play an active part in formulating new certificates. At federal level a tripartite central organizations transpose their proposals in curricula and vocational training legislation.

2. Contents and assessment

2.1 Constitution of training provision

In the majority of Member States within the legislation governing initial training, the Ministries of Education decide upon certificates, their levels and specializations. In a similar manner, qualifications obtained during full-time or part-time school education by young people before leaving the system are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

In Belgium this power is conferred upon the Ministries of Education of the three linguistic communities. In the Federal Republic of Germany the federal states are autonomous but as mentioned above this is coordinated at national level.

In the absence of a national decision-making body in Ireland and in the United Kingdom, in these countries the certification bodies decide on the provision of vocational training qualifications.

2.2 Determining the aims, contents and assessment

Generally it is the ministry or the body conferring the award which convenes a commission to decide upon aims and the type of evaluation.

Based on this principle, this takes a variety of forms from country to country. In France it is the competent ministry which fixes the aims of training courses, the knowledge and skills to be acquired are defined by the consultative professional

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committees made up of educational scientists, social partners and the representatives of the relevant ministry. It is the ministry which takes the final decision. In Denmark assessment is the responsibility of the ministry which establishes a framework through which the professional commissions formulate specific training programmes. In the Federal Republic of Germany decisions on creating new certificate framework programmes and national orientations are taken at a national level. The authorities at the federal state level decide upon the educational part and evaluation of the programme in order to conform with the latter.

In order to set up a coherent national system in the United Kingdom, lead bodies (steering committees) fix the criteria for the different levels of qualification. These are transposed in terms of content and evaluation units by the certification bodies. These apply for recognition to the National Council of Vocational Qualifications.

3. Access to qualifications: conditions, procedures, paths and methods

3.1 Paths

As the studies carried out within our projects show, the most frequent path of access to qualifications is in a large number of countries initial full-time school education, whereby other paths are not excluded. The countries where this trend is most pronounced are France, Italy, Spain and The Netherlands.

In other countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom, apprenticeship and on-the-job training are the main means of acquiring qualifications.

Countries with very theoretical full-time school systems are examining or setting up measures to broaden the choice. The Netherlands, for example, have succeeded through apprenticeship in increasing the number of young people obtaining a skilled worker's qualification and is examining how qualifications for skilled technicians could be organized in a similar way. In France as of 1987 it is possible to agree upon apprenticeship contracts up to the age of 25 at several levels of qualification (Community levels 2, 3 and 4).

3.2 Courses

In a study examining procedures of certification and of obtaining qualifications, courses as such are only important in as far as they help to determine if the trainee may or may not sit an examination or be subject to assessment.

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In the vast majority of qualifications examined, the candidate must follow courses preparing him/her for an examination. The curricula covers the entirety of knowledge, skills and competences which should be acquired before the trainee is permitted to sit an examination.

The exception to this rule is the United Kingdom, where from the legislative point of view it is no longer necessary to follow a course before applying for assessment for a national vocational qualification. Qualifications are based on the results and are developed with reference to defined skills which must be demonstrated at the workplace.

3.3 Means of access

Full-time courses leading to skilled workers certificates to skilled technician and advanced technician exist in all the Member States of the European Community. The exception is the Federal Republic of Germany and here all skilled worker qualifications are obtained within the dual training system. In Italy and in Spain recognized diplomas can only be obtained through full-time courses. While the same holds true for France and Luxembourg for the two levels of technician, both countries propose a full-time and a part-time apprenticeship for attaining skilled worker level. In the United Kingdom full-time paths for levels NVQ/SVQ (National Vocational Qualification/Scottish Vocational Qualification) 2, 3 and 4 exist alongside other apprenticeship paths. In Ireland full-time courses lead to the qualification as skilled technician.

Part-time apprenticeship courses (on certain days or groups of days) are the main path for attaining skilled worker recognition in the majority of industrialized countries. This is also the case in the Federal Republic of Germany and is part of the training provision in most northern European countries. Apprenticeship traditionally covers professions and occupations in the building trade, in engineering, printing and the foodstuffs retail industry. The Federal Republic of Germany is the only country where apprenticeship systematically has been extended to occupations in the tertiary sector. Certain systems allow choice between full-time and alternance paths towards skilled worker status. In this case the certificate awarded is the same regardless of the path chosen. The exception in this case is Belgium where the full-time apprenticeship leads to a recognized diploma whereas the certificate obtained upon completion of apprenticeship is a certificate which is not homologated.

Part-time courses without an apprenticeship contract or practical period usually take the form of evening classes. In the United Kingdom all formal qualifications may

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is attained by attending evening classes. The broad system of social advancement in Belgium also allows individuals who are in full-time employment to obtain formal recognized qualifications by attending evening courses.

It has become evident from the courses offered during the 1980s that the standard courses which could respond to the needs of young people coming straight from compulsory education or secondary education do not correspond in general to the needs of young people who are working, thus measures and projects have been developed to promote adults' access to qualifications.

3.4. Selection criteria

All official, formal qualifications in the countries examined require a certain initial level in order to follow the course or an initial assessment is made.

Access to skilled worker level for young people presupposes attainment of a certain level upon leaving compulsory education. This can be attested through school examinations or through completion of a certain number of school years. Young people who have not reached the required level are rarely admitted to courses leading to a skilled worker qualification. They are generally guided to special programmes. This situation pertains at all qualification levels.

Validation of skills previously acquired has been attempted over a period of time in North America, but is still the exception in Europe. Measures have been recently adopted in France to allow universities to take in students on the basis of their occupational experience. Such an opportunity, however, does not exist for vocational training qualifications at a lower level. Extensive development work has been done in the United Kingdom to take into consideration skills acquired through working life.

3.5 Paths of progression

In view of the on-going process of upgrading occupational skills, there is a need to install paths of progression permitting transition from one level of qualification to another.

In this context it is useful, by way of example, to examine what has been happening in a number of countries.

Belgium: social advancement courses permit progress towards homologated certificates.

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Denmark: recognition of qualifications by the relevant ministries allow transition from one certificate to another. On account of the modular form of the courses organized by AMU (the labour market agency of the employment ministry) qualifications may be gained in a unit system in short courses.

France: the introduction of the professional baccalauréat is an important step in creating a path of progression for young people who have gained their certificate of vocational aptitude (CAP) or diploma of occupational studies (BEP). An additional path is provided by signing a succession of apprenticeship contracts to reach levels 2, 3 and 4. In the continuing training sphere, AFPA qualifications follow clearly defined paths but only for a number of occupational areas. Recent measures aim to open up the possibility of homologation of previously acquired skills to facilitate university entrance and even to reorganize the baccalauréat in modular form.

Federal Republic of Germany: initial agreements on the equivalence of occupational and academic certificates were reached in 1992. Young people entering the dual system with a diploma from the "Hauptschule" (school providing education to secondary level 1) may convert this automatically to a "Realschule" diploma (intermediate school) upon completing their apprenticeship examinations. This opens greater training opportunities.

Ireland: the National Council for Vocational Awards recommends creating a grid reference system of results allowing individuals to transfer both horizontally and vertically. Current reforms in apprenticeship are taking developmental needs into account.

The United Kingdom: the aim of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications is to create a reference system allowing trainees to cross training paths and training levels. The theoretical possibility of progressing from one level to the next has existed for a long time and clearly defined paths of progression have been laid out by the main certification bodies. Academic qualifications upon completing secondary education continue to dominate access to higher education with the institutions accepting on an individual basis candidates holding qualifications which are not typical or which have an occupational orientation (the most common of these being the BTEC - Business and Technology Education Council - National Diploma). Organization of all courses in modular form for

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those over 16 years of age in Scotland is increasing flexibility and opening new paths for progression.

4. Certification

4.1 Determining examination content

To a large extent examination content is determined by the aims and the curricula and thus by the body who takes decisions in these respects. While the initial means of instating certificates are centralized under the control of a ministry, this also holds true for evaluation. It should be pointed out that the body or agency charged with legal provisions concerning certification of qualifications does not necessarily hold responsibility for examination procedures.

In France the consultative professional committees who offer advice to the ministry of education on aims and content of curricula for national diplomas also determine the nature and the content of the examinations. The final decision lies with the ministry as in the case in Italy, Spain and Luxembourg. In Belgium the ministries of the three linguistic communities guarantee the quality of assessment through guidelines but do not stipulate the actual content.

The Danish model differs little from the French one in that legal provisions are the responsibility of the ministry whereby the social partners are consulted. This in Denmark takes place through the occupational committees.

The social partners are also involved in the examinations for apprenticeship certificates in Luxembourg, but undoubtedly it is in Germany that they play the more important role where the Chambers of Commerce and Industry hold overall responsibility for apprenticeships. They also award continuing training certificates for skilled workers awarded "Facharbeiter" (skilled worker) qualifications.

A variety of agencies and bodies fix the content of assessment in Ireland and the United Kingdom. The National Vocational Qualifications being accepted in the United Kingdom, the role of the lead bodies is strengthened in that they can stipulate evaluation methods when determining skill criteria. For other certificates it is usually the certifying body which fixes the content and methods or sets the examinations in the institute. In Ireland there are a series of certification bodies depending on the type of qualification, each of which are entrusted with assessment by the relevant ministry.

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4.2 Carrying out assessment

Very varied solutions have been adopted. In certain instances the examinations are written, in line with a standard formula and are taken by all candidates on the same date as is the case with the famous French Baccalauréat. The examinations may also be taken in the institute concerned, as for example in Belgium where central bodies guarantee the quality of the examination through homologation. The variety does not affect the status of the certificate. Even within the same country, various solutions may co-exist. While the craft examinations in the United Kingdom (City and Guilds of London Institute) take the form of centralized written examinations, technician qualifications "BTEC-National Diploma" and "Higher National Diploma" are awarded by assessment in the institute by the certifying body.

Generally, centralized examinations take the traditional form of written exercises based on knowledge accompanied by practical aptitude tests, particularly at skilled worker level. This type of examination aims to uphold the level, balance and impartiality which anonymity guarantees.

In countries where, generally, vocational training at school is the responsibility of the ministry of education, assessment is usually by examination and this is corrected at a centralized level. At the other end of the scale in the Federal Republic of Germany where there are 83 Chambers of Commerce and Industry, these design and set their own examination (some in written form, some in a multiple choice form).

5. Trends and issues

5.1 Trends

An overview of national situations reveals certain trends.

* National procedures are being instated where this has not already been done. Portugal is experiencing a transition from a situation with no regulatory provision in which many institutions awarded certificates, the validity of which could not be guaranteed to a situation of one certification body guaranteeing overall national coherence. In Greece an institute for education and vocational training has just been set up. This will be responsible for certification. This will no longer be the task of the educational establishments as it was in the past. A central body will regulate this at national level. In Ireland and the United Kingdom as has been mentioned on several occasions the new organization attempts to improve transparency and national coherency.

* There is a general trend towards upgrading vocational training certificates. Some Member States assimilate these to general education certificates. As in Luxembourg, following recent reforms, the diploma awarded at the end of secondary technical education confers the same right as that awarded for general secondary education, notably access to higher education.

The same is true of Belgium, where the D.A.E.S. (diploma giving access to higher education) required to pursue higher education can be awarded to C.E.S.S. (certificate of advanced secondary education) holders whether this had been obtained through technical or general education. Links are being made between certification provided by the education system and that of training oriented directly towards the labour market. This has brought about a social and cultural reassessment of vocational training.

In France the economic difficulties of 1966/67 caused a change in thinking. This resulted in upgrading the certificates awarded by the National Association for the Vocational Training of Adults (AFPA), putting these on a par with those awarded by the ministry of education. This gave birth to the idea of homologation.

* Evidently throughout Europe efforts are being made to broaden access opportunities to all vocational training certificates. Legislators are increasing the openings, diversifying the paths and levels of qualifications and developing alternance training as a means of instruction. Although the means of access may differ (individual instruction, evening classes, teaching by the media), the courses and the certificates are identical to those in more traditional paths. They confer the same rights. In addition, opportunities to sit examinations are increased and these may be spread out and may be taken at any point during working life. The exams are in modular form which participants may sit at their convenience.

Steps have been taken to develop ways of recognizing skills obtained either at school, work or throughout life. The latter - the United Kingdom and France are forerunners in this area - are of particular interest to individuals and social partners. In the 1993 Work Programme, CEDEFOP has taken this topic as a work theme.

* Another general trend is also visible: efforts to overcome exclusion phenomena. In Luxembourg the diploma is the wherewithal. It is recognized both in public and private sector as conferring the right to certain level of employment and remuneration. It also plays an important role in career trends. But 25% of young people do not complete schooling with the desired success. Thus an alternative education system has been developed in several stages which anyone may complete

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in order to obtain a certificate, either as a manual worker or in technical and occupational areas.

In Belgium, an interesting cooperation system has been set up, access to this being provided at several stages during the secondary education cycle.

Alternance training, while stressing the practical aspects of training curricula, has also served as a lifeline for many young people.

5.2 Issues

* Is progress perceptible in the process of European integration? On account of its geographical position and the constraints in training offer, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has promoted mobility of students. In Luxembourg examinations giving access to any certificate include examinations in foreign languages. In addition, on account of intergovernmental agreements, young Luxembourgers have access to higher or university education in other European countries and further afield.

The force of European integration is making an impact in the Member States which are commencing to set up a "European model" for certification systems and qualification grids. Although an actual model on a European level does not exist, efforts have been made and orientations formulated - in particular on the levels of qualifications agreed upon in 1985 in the Council Decision on the comparability of vocational training qualifications - as reference frameworks. This is particularly true of Greece, Spain and Portugal. In addition, in all Member States the social partners, professional organizations and chambers are showing increasing interest in certification issues. One can detect a positive European influence resulting from Social Dialogue on Community level.

* The rapprochement of initial and continuing vocational training awards to those conferred by the general education system results in the benefits we pointed to earlier. Efforts should continue to ensure a more equal evaluation of qualifications awarded by the two systems which for many years have been far removed from each other. Too many individuals are still inclined to favour one to the detriment of the other leading to an over evaluation of white collar training in a number of Member States. Regardless of the country concerned, technical and in particular vocational secondary education are not regarded as valuable paths by parents for their children.

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* Parallel to this, efforts should focus on setting up transparent systems and procedures for recognizing skills gained through work and life experience. Although this is not always self-evident, such skills are no less useful or are even indispensable for the company. These should be made more evident, should be taken into account in a tangible manner and should be certified in order to be taken into consideration in negotiations on the classification of occupations. Studies and exchanges of views on such practices are indispensable to bring about change in behaviour and in thinking.

The Council Resolution on the transparency of qualifications, mentioned in the introduction to this CEDEFOP Flash, states in the preamble that the social partners advocate an evolutionary approach to this and believe "that means must be found for taking into account the relevant skills and knowledge of workers who have acquired these without formal study and certification."

* The link between occupational classifications and certification of training needs to be formulated progressively. This interlinking is arbitrary, particularly at times of economic crisis when companies make more workers redundant than they recruit. And here the social partners have a duty to intervene as only through their action can certificates be recognized in collective bargaining agreements and taken into account in recruitment policies. The holder of a certificate would take up employment, as is the case in Luxembourg, at the classification level corresponding to his level of qualification.

* The social partners should bring influence to bear in the creation of other models of continuing training than those synonymous with initial training. Subjecting adults to the same training activities and contents as young people may reduce motivation. Following a period of identification with school systems, continuing training should deviate from this and define its own qualification and certification criteria.

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TABLE 1 - LEVEL 2 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	<i>Certificat de qualification</i> <i>Sec. Sec. 7e</i>	full time	national accredited diploma (according to statute of the school)	Ministère de l'Enseignement et de la Communauté	The Ministère de l'Enseignement guarantees the soundness and quality of the assessment. The examination panels are set up by the schools which also conduct the awards	16 - 19
	<i>Certificat d'apprentissage des Classes Moyennes</i>	apprenticeship	accredited diploma or certificate of attendance	Ministère de l'Enseignement et de la Communauté or training centre	Training centres are responsible for assessment if the certificate is not accredited	16 - 19
	<i>Certificat d'apprentissage Industriel</i>	apprenticeship	certificate of attendance	training centre		16 - 19
DENMARK	Basic vocational training awards	apprenticeship	national diploma	overall responsibility: Ministry of Education (for Ministry of Industry for maritime training and National Trade Councils for the trade expertise)	The Ministry responsible determines what will be examined. The colleges devise the exam papers and carry out assessment. Some external examiners for control purposes. The Trade Council defines the skill content	18 - 21 (also in adult education)
FRANCE	<i>Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP)</i> <i>Brevet d'enseignement professionnel (BEP)</i>	full time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Éducation nationale	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised and timetable established by regional offices (Rectorat). Also nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by Rectorat.	16 - 20
	<i>Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle de l'agriculture (CAPA)</i>	full time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Agriculture	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	16 - 20
	<i>Certificat de formation professionnelle (CFP)</i> <i>Certificat de perfectionnement professionnel (CNP)</i>	full time	accredited awards	Prime Minister's Office/Ministère du Travail	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externally. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	18 +

TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

FRANCE (cont.)	other awards	full time or alternance	national diplomas, accredited awards or others	<i>Ministères du Commerce et de l'Artisanat, de la Santé, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, de la Défense, de la Mer</i>		18 +
	<i>Certificat de qualification</i>	alternance	<i>certificat de qualification professionnelle or accredited award</i>	<i>Commission paritaire de l'emploi de la branche professionnelle</i>	Training centre devises and carries out exams.	18 +
GERMANY	<i>Facharbeiterbrief (Industry)</i> <i>Gesellen brief (crafts)</i> <i>Gehilfe brief (tertiary sector)</i>	apprenticeship	nationally recognised diploma	The Ministry of Education of each Land for the school based part and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce or of Crafts or the competent body for the firm-based part	The Ministry of Education for each Land has overall responsibility for the school-based part. Exams set and carried out in school by teachers. The Chambers of Industry and Commerce or of Crafts or the competent body examines the firm-based part.	19 +
GREECE	<i>Technikes Epangelmatikes Scholes</i>	full time	national diploma (<i>Ptychion</i>)	Ministry of Education	Guidelines established by the Pedagogical Institute under the Ministry of Education.	18
	<i>Meses Technikes Nosileftikes Scholes (Health)</i>	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health	Exam paper devised and delivered by schools. Award conferred by school	18
	<i>Scholes Touristikou Epangelmatou</i>	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of National Economy		18
	<i>OAED-Scholes Mathitias or Kentra Techniks</i>	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Labour		18
	<i>Epangelmatikis K. artistis</i> <i>OEEK-IEK Apprenticeship Certificate (in planning stages only)</i>	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education		18
IRELAND	Vocational Preparation Training 2 Programmes	apprenticeship	national training qualification	Joint FAS/Department of Enterprise and Employment	No standard approach. Exams can be externally or internally set.	16 +
	National Craft Certificate	apprenticeship	national training qualification	Teagasc	Exams devised by FAS or NTCB. Carried out and marked in training centre. Award conferred by FAS or NTCB.	16 - 20
	Craft Certificate in Tourism and Catering					
	Joint FAS/C&G Certificates	apprenticeship	national training qualification	NTCB/CERT	FAS devises exams. Carried out in training centre. Joint accreditation by FAS and C&G.	mainly 18 - 35 but all ages included
	Farm Apprenticeship Scheme				Exams devised by Teagasc. Carried out and marked in training centre. Award conferred by Teagasc.	18 - 25
	Certificate in Farming					

TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

ITALY	diploma di qualifica attesto di idoneità qualifica professionale	full-time (school) full-time (regional centres)	national diploma attestato regionale e nazionale	Ministry of Education Ministry of Employment and the Regions	Exam panel nominated by head teacher. Exams carried out and marked in school. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	16 - 17 16 - 17
	certificato di qualifica professionale (settore artigianato)	alternance (enterprise- based)	certificato regionale	Ministry of Employment and the Regions or Autonomous Provinces	Same regulations for regionally organised awards but panel includes representatives of ministries and social partners.	15 - 20
LUXEMBOURG	Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle (CATP)	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education and the Chambres professionnelles	National exams. Marked under supervision of exam panel. Award conferred by Ministry of Education and the Chambers.	18 - 20
NETHERLANDS	Kort Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (KMBO)	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations devised and delivered by the colleges. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education	17 - 18 - 19
	Primaire/Secundaire Leerlingen	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Centrally set examinations. Administered by a Ministry of Education appointed board in consultation with the relevant national body (LOB). Also college examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and the LOB.	17 - 18 - 19
PORTUGAL	Certificado de aptidão profissional	full-time or evening classes	nationally recognised award	Ministry of Employment (by IEFP)	All examinations devised and delivered within the teaching institutions by teachers and examination panels. For Certificado de aptidão panels are nominated by IEFP in consultation	17 - 18
	ensino profissional Certificate of apprenticeship	part-time apprenticeship	national award nationally recognised award	Ministry of Education Ministry of Employment (by IEFP)	with Regions and Ministry of Employment. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education or the IEFP.	17 - 18 17 - 18
	Escolas profissionais	full-time or evening classes	national award	Ministry of Education		17 - 18

TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

SPAIN	<i>Título de formación profesional (FP1): Técnico Auxiliar</i>	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Exams devised centrally by the <i>Junta de Evaluación</i> but delivered and marked by an examination panel set up by the school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education	17 - 18
	<i>Certificados Profesionalidad (parciales) Diplomas</i>	full-time, alternance or part-time	certificate of competence	Ministry of Employment (INEM) and other organisations (universities, public and private organisations)	Under the responsibility of INEM, delivered and marked by training centres. Awards conferred by INEM	16 +
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 2/3 SVQ Level 2/3 GNVQ Level 2 gSVQ Level 2 also City and Guilds Craft Certificate RSA Certificate BTEC 1 st Diploma	All modes of acquisition are possible but some more usual for some qualifications	national vocational qualifications	accreditation by NCVQ (England and Wales and N. Ireland) and SCOTVEC (Scotland)	City and Guilds and RSA examinations devised and delivered centrally by each board. Award conferred by each Board.	17 - 18 and over
			awards of examining and validating bodies	relevant awarding body	BTEC issues guidelines and moderates. Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institution which confers award. Same for SCOTVEC	

TABLE 2 - LEVEL 3 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	CESS Technique	full-time	national diploma or accredited award	Ministère de l'Enseignement of each Community	The Ministères de l'Enseignement guarantee the procedures and quality of the assessment. Examination panels set up by the schools which also confer the awards	18 - 20
DENMARK	Højere Handels examen Højere Teknisk Examen	full time school	national diploma	Ministry of Education	The Ministry determines what will be examined. The schools and colleges devise exams and carry out assessment with some external control.	18 +
	Technician Awards	full time further education	national diploma	Ministry of Education and National Trade Councils	The Trade Councils determine trade content	18 +
FRANCE	Baccalauréat technologique	full time	national diploma	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised and timetable established by regional offices (Rectorat). Also nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by Rectorat.	17 - 20
	Baccalauréat professionnel	full time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale		17 - 20
	Brevet de technicien	full time	national diploma	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale		17 - 20
	Brevet de technicien de l'Agriculture	full time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Agriculture	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	17 - 20
	other awards	full time or alternance	national diplomas or accredited awards	Prime Minister's Office	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externally. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	17 - 20

TABLE 2 - (CONT.)

GERMANY	Fachschuldiplom: State-certified technician	full time or part time	national award	Federal Government (Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)	Examinations set and delivered by the teaching institution	20 +
	Mastercraftsman	part time	national award	competent bodies (eg. Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts)	Examinations set and delivered by the competent bodies	20 +
GREECE	Technika Epangelmatika Lykia	full time	national diploma (Ptychion)	Ministry of Education	Guidelines established by the Pedagogical Institute under the Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
	EPL - Certificate of Integral Multidiscipline Lyceum	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Exam paper devised and delivered by schools. Award conferred by school	18 - 19
	Merchant Navy Lyceum Certificate (Nafika Lykia)	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Merchant Marine		18 - 19
	OEEK-IEK Apprenticeship Certificate (in planning stages only)	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education		18 - 19
IRELAND	National Council for Educational Awards	full time	national vocational award	National Council for Educational Awards	Assessment devised and delivered by the Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology	usually 18 - 25
	National Certificate City and Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate	apprenticeship	recognised award	City and Guilds of London Institute	The CGI sets and marks the exam	
ITALY	Maturità &/o abilitazione professionali	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	National exam panel. Exams devised centrally for all country. Marking centrally supervised. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	18 - 19
LUXEMBOURG	Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques Diplôme de technicien	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Exams set and delivered nationally. Award conferred by Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
NETHERLANDS	Middelbaar beroepsopleiding (MBO)	full time or part time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	College and central examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education	18 +
	Apprenticeship (Secondary/Tertiary levels)	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Central examinations devised by Central Examining Board in consultation with LOBs. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and LOB.	18 +

TABLE 2 - (CONT.)

PORTUGAL	<i>Ensino secundário técnico-profissional</i>	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations set and delivered by the schools. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	16 - 19
	<i>ensino profissional</i> technician apprenticeship certificates	full time or evening classes apprenticeship	national diploma national diploma	Ministry of Education Ministry of Employment (by IEFP)	Examinations set and delivered by schools with representatives of industry on panels. Awards conferred by the IEFP.	18 + 16 - 19
SPAIN	<i>Título de Técnico CF-2 (grado medio)</i> <i>Título de Técnico especialista</i>	full time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Exams devised centrally by the Junta de Evaluación but delivered and marked by examination panel set up by school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
	<i>Certificados de Profesionalidad (parciales)</i> <i>Diplomas</i>	full time, alternance or part-time	certificate of competence	Ministry of Employment (INEM) and other bodies (universities, public and private organisations)	Responsibility of the teaching institution. Awards conferred by INEM or institution responsible.	16 +
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 3/4 SVQ Level 3/4 GNVQ Level 3 gSVQ Level 3	All modes of acquisition possible but some are more usual for some qualifications	national vocational qualifications	accreditation by NCVQ (England, Wales and N. Ireland) and SCOTVEC (Scotland)	Examinations set and delivered according to the practice of the individual awarding body which awards its own certificates and diplomas accredited by NCVQ.	18 +
	BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas SCOTVEC National Certificates and Diplomas		awards of examining and validating bodies	relevant awarding body	BTEC and SCOTVEC issue guidelines and moderate. Examinations devised and delivered by teaching institution which confers the award.	18 +

TABLE 3 - LEVEL 4 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	Graduat of short higher education	full-time	national diploma	Ministère de l'Enseignement of each Community	Set and delivered by the teaching institution	21 - 22
DENMARK	awards of the Advanced Technical Training Schemes	full-time	national diplomas	Ministry of Education	College sets and delivers the assessment	20 +
FRANCE	Brevet de technicien supérieur	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Education Nationale	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised and timetable established by regional offices (Rectorat). Also nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by Rectorat.	21 - 22
	Brevet de technicien supérieur de l'Agriculture	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministère de l'Agriculture	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	21 - 22
	Diplôme universitaire de technologie	full-time or modularised	national diploma	Ministère de l'Education Nationale	Students examined by continuous assessment and work placement report. Internally examined by the teachers. University confers the award.	21 - 22
	other awards	full-time or alternance	national diplomas or accredited awards	relevant Ministry or Prime Minister's Office	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externally. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	21 - 22
GERMANY	Assistenten Ausbildung (Berlin and Baden-Württemberg)	full-time	national award	Länder Ministries of Education	Examinations set, delivered and marked in the colleges.	19-22
	Abschlußzeugnis or Diplomzeugnis from Berufshochschule	part-time	national award (with status of state examination)	Länder Government	Examinations set and delivered in teaching institution. Awards conferred by the institutions on behalf of the Ministry of Education of the Land	20 +

TABLE 3 - (CONT.)

GREECE	<i>Anoteres Scholes Emporikon Naftikon</i> (Merchant Navy)	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Merchant Marine	Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institutions, which also confer and validate the award	20 +
	<i>Anotera Scholi Touristikou Epangelmatou</i>	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of National Economy	Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institution. Award conferred by the School of Tourism Occupations (for the Greek Tourist Organisation)	20 +
IRELAND	National Council for Educational Awards- Technician Diploma awards of certain professional bodies	full-time	national vocational award	National Council for Educational Awards	Assessment devised and delivered by the Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology	20 +
		part-time	professional award	the relevant professional body	Devised by each professional body	20 +
ITALY	<i>Diploma universitario di primo livello</i>	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examination panel set up by the university. Set and marked internally. Award conferred by University	20 - 22
LUXEMBOURG	<i>Diplôme d'ingénieur technicien</i>	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Nationally organised final exam marked by school. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	21 - 22
	<i>Brevet de technicien supérieur</i>	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Continuous assessment carried out and marked in the institutes. Award conferred by Ministry of Education.	21 - 22
NETHERLANDS	<i>Hoger Beroeps onderwijs</i> (4 year course)	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Set and delivered by the colleges. Award conferred by college on behalf of Ministry of Education	22 - 23
	Apprenticeship (Tertiary level)	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Centrally set examinations administered by a Ministry of Education appointed board in consultation with the relevant national body (LOB); also College examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and LOB.	22 - 23

TABLE 3 - (CONT.)

PORTUGAL	awards of the ensino profissional	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations set and delivered by the schools. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	20 +
SPAIN	Título de Técnico superior CF-3	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Examinations devised centrally by the Junta de Evaluación but delivered and marked by panel set up by school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	20 - 21
	Certificados de profesionalidad (parciales) Diplomas	full-time or alternance part-time	certificates of competence	Ministry of Employment (INEM) and other bodies (universities, public and private organisations)	Responsibility of the teaching institution. Awards conferred by INEM or the institution responsible.	20 - 21
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 4 SVQ Level 4	All modes of acquisition possible but some more usual for some qualifications	national vocational awards	accredited by National Council for Vocational Qualifications	Examinations set and delivered according to the practice of the individual awarding body which awards its own certificates and diplomas accredited by NCVQ	20 +
	BTEC Higher National Diploma/Certificate SCOTVEC Higher National Diploma/Certificate		awards of the bodies concerned	validated by the awarding body	BTEC and SCOTVEC issue guidelines and moderate. Examinations devised and delivered by teaching institution which confers the award.	20 +
	Awards of some professional bodies		awards of the bodies concerned	awarded by the relevant professional body	Devised by each professional body	20 +